

Lean Process Event Summary

Process/Team Name: BTS/PA Lean

Meeting Date(s): August 8,10,11, 2016 9:00-4:00

Completed by: Jessica Caron

Location(s): DHHS Brown Building Auditorium and Fox Chapel, BDS

Team Members: Tim Leach (Sponsor), Sandy Hunt (Sponsor), Sudip Adhikari, Michelle Rosado, Darlene Ferguson, Ken Lindberg, Mary Coates, Pam Dushan, Mindy Pond, Danielle Fuller, Leslie Mason, and John MacPhee (Caucus Member) Jim Connell (Caucus Member), Matthew Ertas (Caucus Member), David Jenkins, and Jessica Caron (Facilitator)

Overview:

In January 2016, sponsors Tim Leach and Lorene Reagan approached David A. Jenkins & Associates to facilitate a Lean Process Improvement Event for the full Budget Tracking System (BTS) and Prior Authorization (PA) approval processes. These processes track an agency's request for Medicaid and state-allocated dollars, utilized to provide appropriate, person-specific services to individuals who meet qualifications for funding on the DD, ABD, and IHS waivers. Once approval is obtained, the PA allows for area agency billing on behalf of the individual, for services received. These processes were self-identified by BDS and area agency staff as being time-intensive and difficult to navigate with little process documentation available, which allowed for a high level of "user-error." Additionally, the New Hampshire Health and Human Services Department identified these systems in their BDS Performance Audit from February 2016 as needing improvement. This project would be jointly approached by area agency and BDS staff.

In 2015, the beginning of an event was held, but the remainder was cancelled, due to factors unrelated to the Lean process. The results of that Lean event were intended to reach BDS staff and all of the area agencies, which made navigating change on such a large scale difficult for some users. As a result, and to gain a deeper insight into the complex systems that were impacting the Bureau and all area agencies, fact finding sessions were held via conference call and in-person meetings – to allow for all users to voice concerns and issues – before holding a full event with an identified team. Dave Jenkins and Jessica Caron facilitated the preliminary fact finding sessions throughout February, March, and April, 2016. Bureau liaisons and PA staff met separately from area agency representatives, who formed their own group. Comments and concerns from each group were then reviewed with the representatives from the other. A Lean event was scheduled for June 13, 15, and 17, but was cancelled due to a change in leadership at the Bureau; it was rescheduled and held on August 8, 10, and 11 at the state hospital campus in Concord, NH.

Achievements:

Fact finding sessions were recommended, to allow for the facilitators to review the processes in greater detail and sort through pain-points that were deeply impacting BDS and area agency staff. These sessions introduced staff to the following: concepts of Lean process improvement, system users' understanding of the purpose of BTS, identifying pain points in both processes, reviewing what may currently be working well, inconsistencies in approach among liaisons and area agencies, discussing the need for a more cohesive and uniformed approach, and separating the Unit Change Request (UCR) and Environmental Modification (e-mod) processes from the larger Lean event, due to the unique nature of each.

On April 18th, the UCR and E-mod processes were reviewed by a small group, in an attempt to narrow the focus of the full Lean, and also to bring quicker improvements to elements of the BTS/PA processes. The small group created a more formalized approach to using these two processes and also requested a written process and procedure from the state. The forms were reviewed and updated, as well. The roll out of these new processes is still pending at the state level.

On August 8th, the group came together to map the current state of the BTS and PA processes. A fair amount of time was spent discussing the impact that the continuous feed-back loops and lack of continuity in submitting requests and approval of requests may have on the overall process. It became clear to the group that a lot of the work for this project would involve establishing a standardization of practices, as well as better training and documentation on use of the product. The BTS system, itself, was also discussed as being a large barrier to timely work for both BDS staff and the area agency users. A lengthy discussion regarding IT possibilities and monuments took place, with the group settling on the possible need for multiple future states – one involving more timely results, but less overall improvement, and the other being of greater cost, with the possibility for far greater improvement and automation of the overall process.

When the group came together again, after completing the current state map, “**bright ideas**” for the future were discussed, with the main points identified as the following:

- a “live” BTS system to allow for direct input and automated notification as the request moves through the system,
- enhancements to the current BTS system,
- streamlining the approach to BTS entry and/or earlier entry by AAs,
- use of one platform for all documentation that requires review by BDS staff,
- consistency in liaison’s approval of documentation and BTS entries,
- regular and earlier review of a client’s Medicaid status,
- earlier PA entry by AAs,
- greater access by AAs to a client’s Medicaid status (new heights vs. MMIS enhancements),
- a direct feed from PAWS to MMIS/ MMIS to PAWS,



- electronic submission and approvals by XEROX/MMIS,
- electronically fillable documents in HRST for PA (Functional Screen),
- review of the Functional Screen – usability, etc.,
- voided PA notes available for view by AA staff, and
- a quicker process for subsequent PA requests for new-waivered adult service requests.

The Lean group discussed and moved forward with a plan to map a future state with a 6 – 12 month implementation approach, which would address the easier, less-costly enhancements to the system and process, overall. These include the following: addressing issues with the current BTS software; increased education, training, and written system documentation; a streamlined approach to approvals by BDS staff; discussions with XEROX to address electronic submissions of PA packages; and, earlier submissions of requests by AA staff.

An implementation plan was developed and approved by the group, with work towards IT enhancements and review starting in the following week.

Limitations:

It was the conscious decision of the Lean group to put a plan into motion which would not address all needs and goals that were listed in the charter. This was due, in large part, to the high cost of the many technological upgrades that would need to take place for a true future state to come to fruition. Additionally, concerns were expressed by the group in regards to the time that a “live” and automated BTS process would take to develop; the group agreed that an alleviation of pain related to this process would be needed sooner rather than later.

A future state, which would address all of the concerns, was easily agreed upon by the group, but most members struggled with the realities of how to make such a process come together. In an effort to maintain an eye on the possibility of a future state that would truly address all of the goals in the charter, the Lean team will meet again on September 21st to map this “true north” future state, while continuing work on the current process plan.

An atypical approach was adopted by the group to review bright ideas to apply as many as possible to the current state (keeping in mind the limitations that were presented), rather than mapping a true “future state”. Below, the current state is mapped with enhancements identified near the corresponding steps.

Metrics

Another limitation related to this project is the clear lack of consistent data from agency to agency. Due to current practices, which allow for liaisons and area agencies to maintain some variability in their approach to the process, state-wide data on timing for this process is challenging to track with accuracy. For example, it has been reported that a step can take 10 minutes, but it could also take up to a week, depending largely upon the feedback loops that are often found in the process map. For those reasons, the group focused its efforts on eliminating some of the variability in steps and eliminating errors prior to possible feedback loops, as well as automating more steps in the process.

Although difficult to track, the following time-saving measures have been identified in the following future state:

- If a shared platform is utilized, additional process time that is required for resubmission of documentation will be eliminated (5 – 15 minutes per document).
- Reviewing the IT system could alleviate delays when the request is sitting with the BDS office (system delays may add hours to a review of a request).
- If the PA request were to be electronically accepted by Xerox, 5 days would be removed from the process (3, postal service; 2 for the scanning department to scan the document).
- Additionally, a direct interface between PAWS and MMIS would eliminate the need for checking both systems when the PA is approved (3 – 5 minutes for request; additional day – weeks for corrections if errors are present).

Conceivably, the new process could eliminate over 5 days of combined work and cycle time for each request, if all currently recommended aspects are carried out. Not included in this time estimate is the savings that would take place when all staff are following a more common approach, with greater training/less errors requiring resubmission.

Recommendations for systems that would “speak directly” to the next system in the process from initial BTS request to the PA approval, would help to eliminate the higher volume of user error/feed-back loops that are currently being experienced, and could possibly take hours to complete, rather than weeks, when a request is accurately completed.

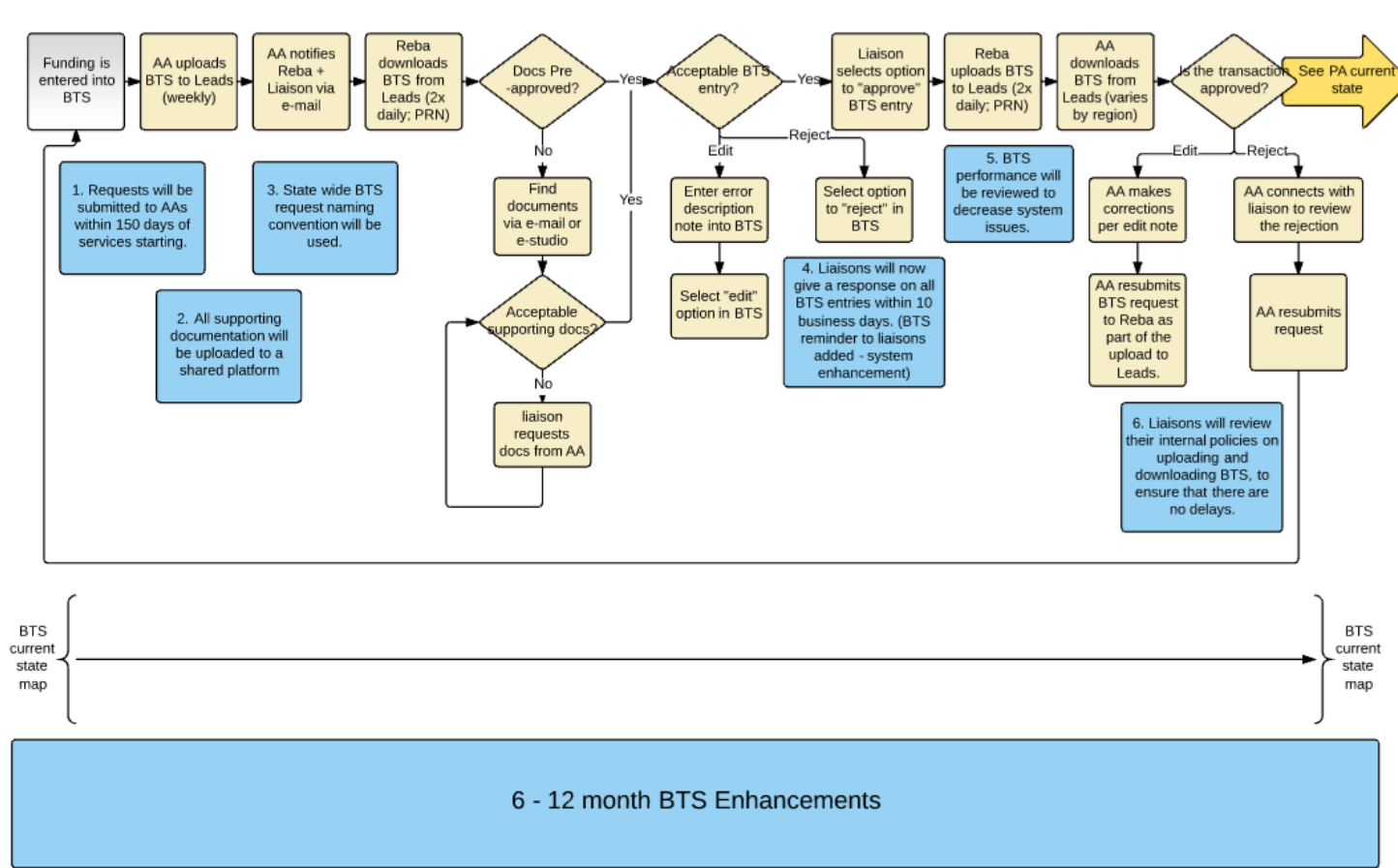
Future State Process Mapping:

Gray = start/end

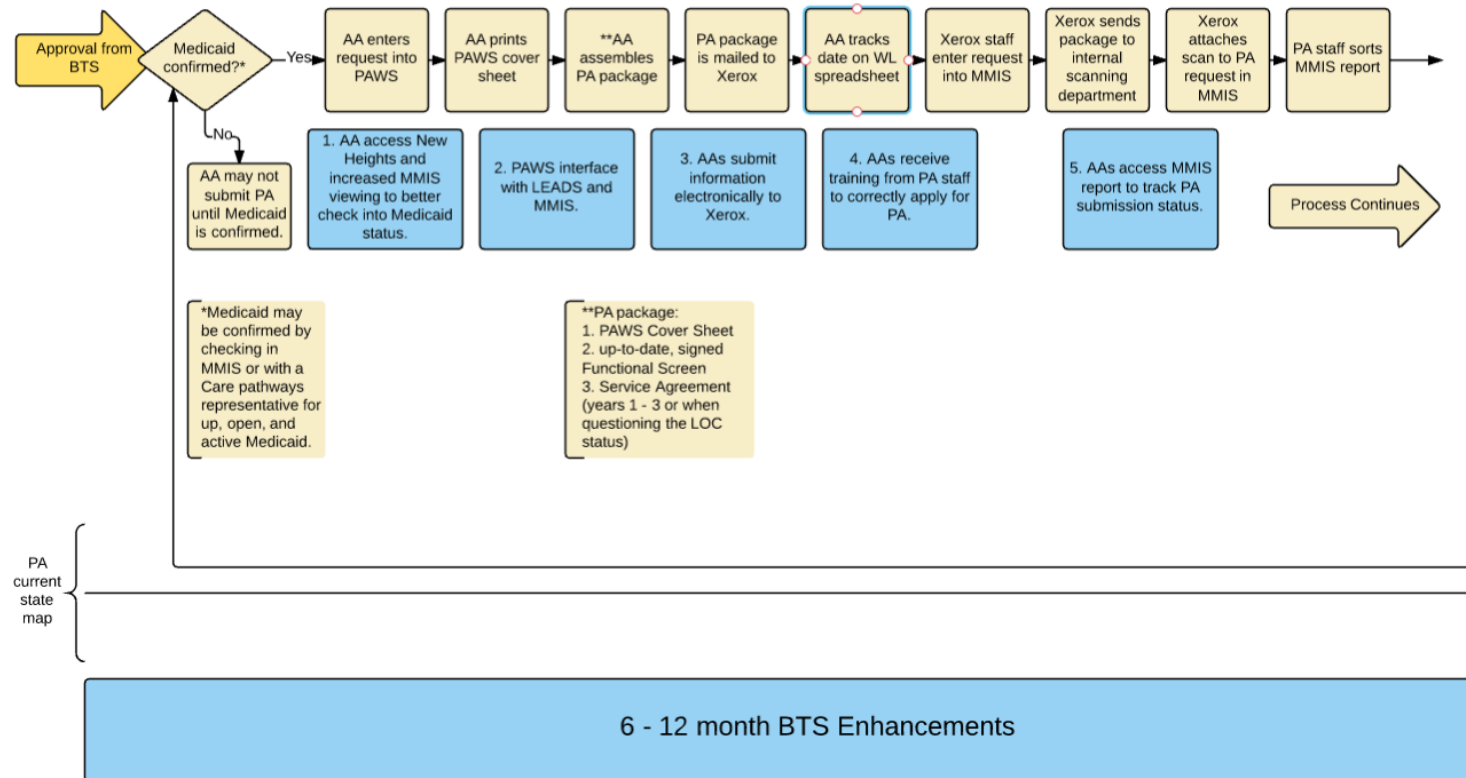
Yellow = "current state"

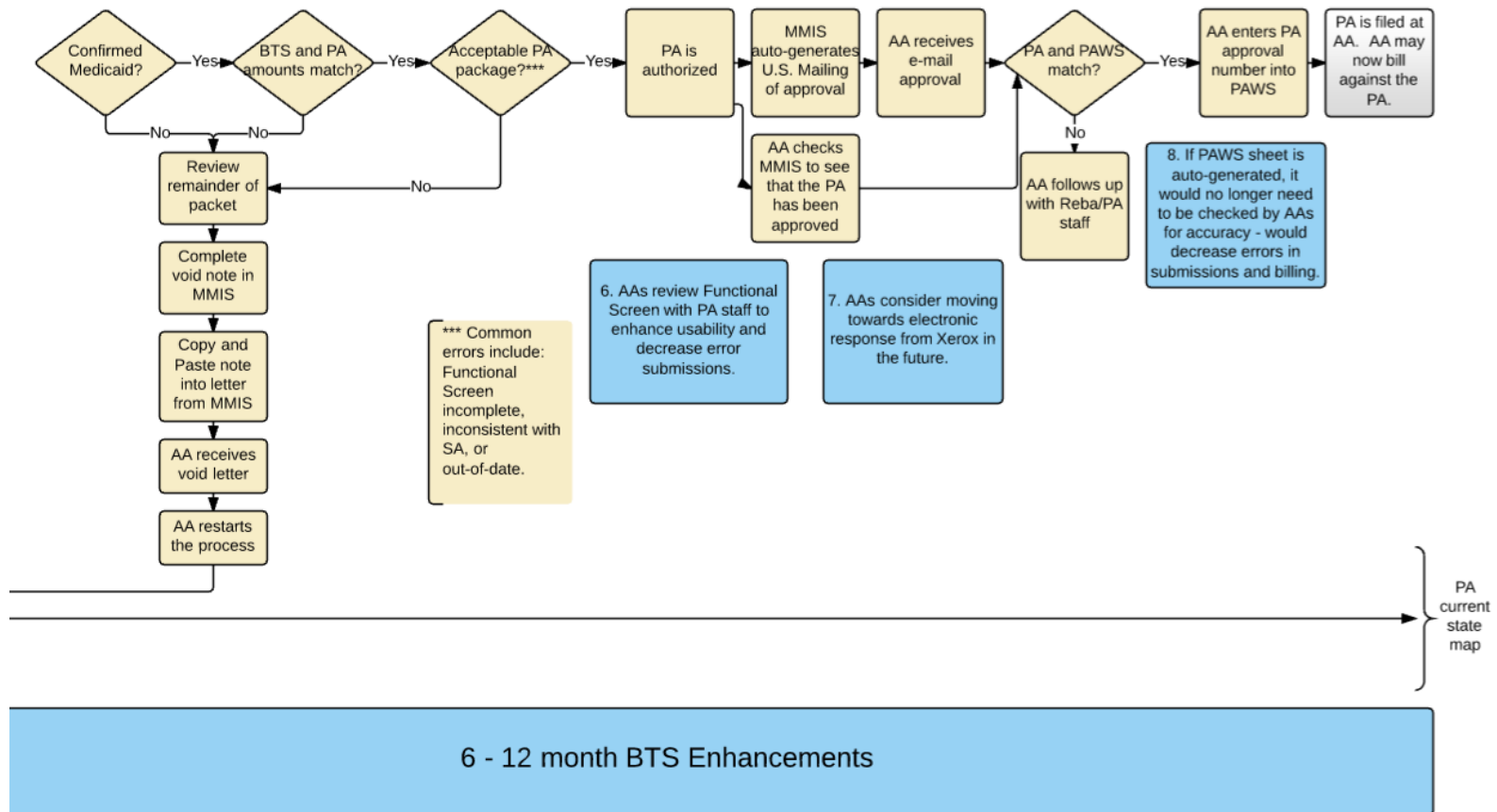
Blue = enhancements to the current state

Map 1: Enhancements to BTS and Increased Training/Consistency



Map 1 Continued





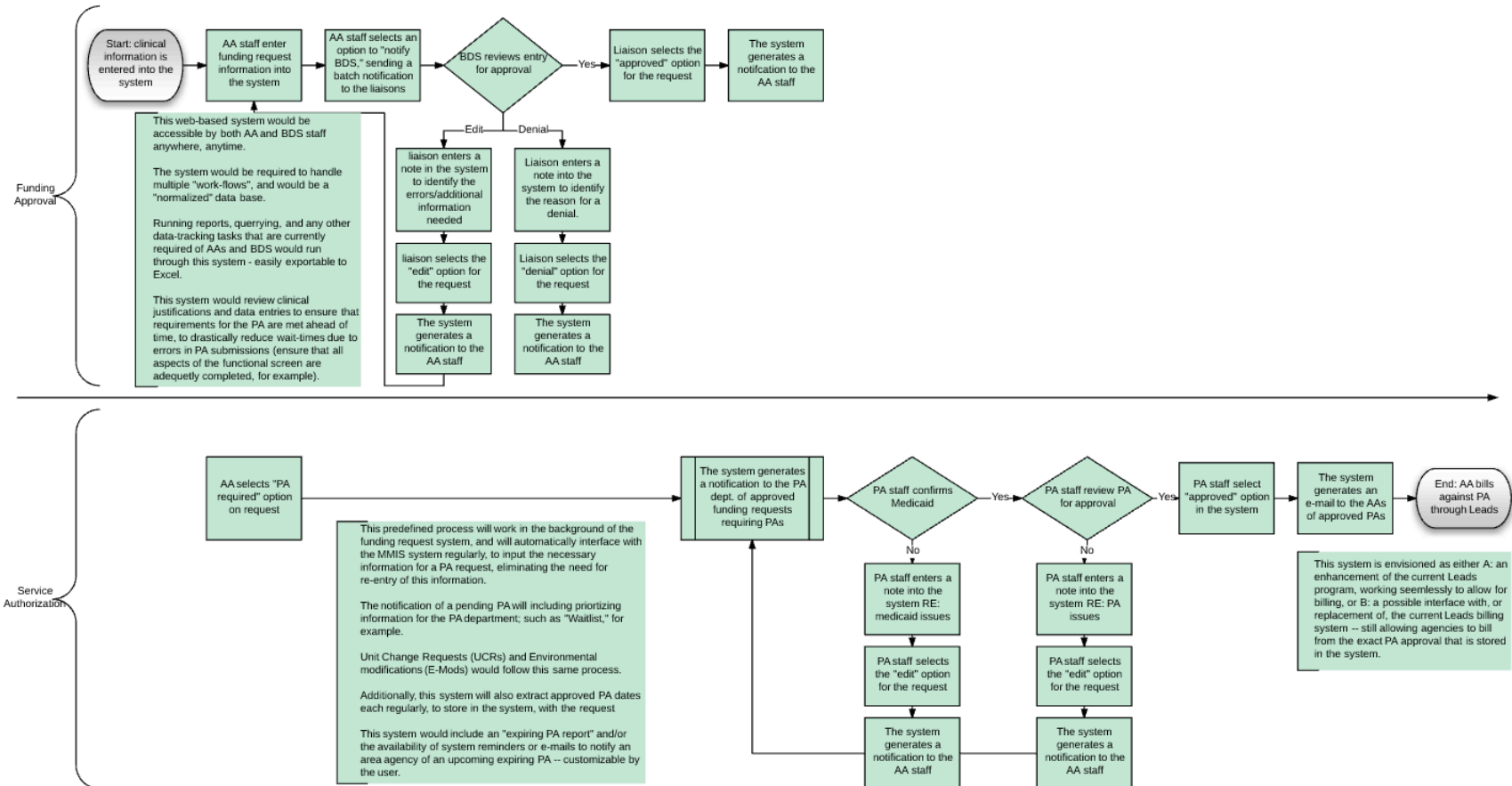
Map 2 on next page →

Map 2: Single-Entry System

Future State Process Mapping:

Gray = start/end

Yellow = "true north" future state



Submitted by:

Jessica Caron & David A. Jenkins

David A. Jenkins & Associates